FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 5, 2020

2020 JOYCE CAROL OATES PRIZE FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

LAFAYETTE, CA, March 5, 2020—The seven Shortlist Finalists for the 2020 Joyce Carol Oates Prize sponsored by the Simpson Literary Project, an award that honors a distinguished mid-career author of fiction, were announced today in a private ceremony. The $50,000 Prize has been bestowed annually since 2017. The Finalists were selected by an anonymous jury from authors confidentially nominated by publishers, reviewers, agents, authors and other representatives.

The Finalists for the 2020 Joyce Carol Oates Prize are:

Chris Bachelder, author of The Throwback Special (W.W. Norton)
Maria Dahvana Headley, author of The Mere Wife (MCD/FSG)
Rebecca Makkai, author of The Great Believers (Viking)
Daniel Mason, author of The Winter Soldier (Little, Brown, & Co.)
Peter Orner, author of Maggie Brown and Others: Stories (Little, Brown, & Co.)
Dexter Palmer, author of Mary Toft; or The Rabbit Queen (Pantheon)
Kevin Wilson, author of Nothing to See Here (Ecco)

All seven finalists for the 2020 Joyce Carol Oates Prize are spectacularly deserving, having justifiably earned the love and admiration and awe of readers everywhere. The Simpson Literary Project invests in and supports stories and storytelling across a great social and generational spectrum. Where we celebrate stories and their makers, including especially those on our shortlist here, we affirm the best of our diverse communities and cultures and underscore our shared humanity.

— Joseph Di Prisco, Founding Chair, Simpson Literary Project
The Prize Recipient is expected to be named in late March 2020. The recipient will give readings and make appearances in the Bay Area in 2020-2021 and will participate in a residency in the English Department at the University of California, Berkeley and at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center, during the Spring Semester 2021. In addition, the Finalists will each receive $1,500 and will contribute to Simpsonistas: Tales from the Simpson Literary Project Vol. 3.

The nonprofit Simpson Literary Project, established in 2016, is an innovative private/public enterprise, founded in partnership between the University of California, Berkeley, the Lafayette Library & Learning Center Foundation and the Contra Costa County Library. The Project fosters new literature, supports authors, and enhances the lives of the readers, writers, educators, & students in diverse communities throughout California and the nation as a whole. The Project serves high-school age writers from Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall, Girls Inc. of Alameda County, and elsewhere through workshops conducted by Simpson Fellows, who are graduate students and creative writing teachers from the UC Berkeley English Department.

The eminent Joyce Carol Oates, formerly the Simpson Literary Project Writer-in-Residence at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center, is now an honorary member of the Simpson Literary Project Board of Directors. In addition, 2017 Joyce Carol Oates Prize Winner, T. Geronimo Johnson, author of Welcome to Braggsville (HarperCollins), 2018 Joyce Carol Oates Prize Winner Anthony Marra, author of The Tsar of Love and Techno (Hogarth), and 2019 Joyce Carol Oates Prize winner Laila Lalami, author of The Moor’s Account (Vintage), will continue their engagements with the Simpson Literary Project.

For more information, please contact Diane Del Signore at 510.919.0970 or email at diane@simpsonliteraryproject.org.

2020 Joyce Carol Oates Prize

The 2020 Joyce Carol Oates Prize, sponsored by the Simpson Literary Project, is an award that honors a distinguished mid-career author of fiction. The Prize Recipient receives a $50,000 award to encourage and support forthcoming work. The Prize Recipient will join Laila Lalami, Anthony Marra and T. Geronimo Johnson, as a winner of the Joyce Carol Oates Prize.
The Finalists for the 2020 Joyce Carol Oates Prize